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SERVICE-LEARNING: TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION COMMUNICATIONS KIT



**USER'S
GUIDE**



State Farm[®]
Companies
FOUNDATION

The Service-Learning: Turning Ideas into Action Communications Kit is funded through a gift from State Farm Companies Foundation.





Dear Service-Learning Leaders:

We created this kit to help you spread the word about service-learning and its impact on learning and transforming communities. You are on the front lines of making the case for service-learning and are one of its greatest advocates.

Across the country, service-learning programs are helping people connect academic and community-based curricula with community service. These efforts are helping mentor youth, feed the hungry, and improve the environment while re-engaging students in school, increasing their test scores, and providing them with workplace skills. Recent research shows that there are millions of young people contributing hundreds of millions of hours to service-learning.

This service-learning communications kit user's guide provides you with the tools and information you need to spread the word about service-learning. It walks you through a step-by-step process and then provides you with additional strategies to tell your service-learning story. At the end of the guide, you will find links to additional resources to help grow service-learning programs.

Thanks for spreading the word about how service-learning is changing communities!



— Learn and Serve America

WHAT'S INSIDE

- USER'S GUIDE

Provides an overview and explanation of the materials in the Service-Learning Communications Kit. It includes tips for presenting and promoting service-learning initiatives and information on resources to help you establish service-learning programs in your school and community.

- DVD

Contains PowerPoints and media to help you communicate the value of service-learning and enhance the quality of presentations you make to community leaders, teachers, administrators, and students.

Adult Audience PowerPoint

A primer on the practice behind service-learning. It is designed to inform parents and community leaders and create support for service-learning. By breaking down service-learning into core components, explaining the program's value, and providing real-life examples of successful initiatives, this presentation will help lay the foundation for productive discussions about bringing service-learning into a curriculum.

Youth Audience PowerPoint

Provides information about service-learning. It is designed to build interest in service-learning among students. This presentation also provides information about the specific benefits young people receive by participating in service-learning programs.

Media Loop

Features photos and video of students engaged in service-learning around the country. Use it to set the tone and introduce your presentation. It can also be shown at an exhibit or other information session.

The PSA, or

Public Service Announcement

A short visual message that communicates the concept and value of service-learning. It can be aired over local television stations or streamed online. For information on how to get it broadcast in your area, visit www.tvaccessreports.com/learnandserve.

Bring Learning to Life Program Video

An eight-minute video introduction to service-learning. Copies can be made and distributed for participants to share with their colleagues.

Spirit of Service Video

Summarizes the core values that drive any successful service-learning initiative. It can be used as a motivational tool to encourage people to embrace the underlying mission of service-learning.

Service: A Solution for Higher Education Video

Explains how service-learning and service programs can strengthen and benefit colleges and universities.

- STICKERS (FIVE SHEETS CONTAINING SIX STICKERS EACH)

Can be used for marking collateral material with the service-learning brand.

- MAGNET

A gift for you, the presenter, to acknowledge and celebrate your efforts to spread the word about service-learning.

- POSTERS (TWO PER KIT)

Geared toward building student interest/recruitment. Place them in schools, libraries, bookstores, community centers, and other places where you find students.



WHAT'S INSIDE

- SERVICE-LEARNING: IN ACTION GUIDE

This brochure on the basics of service-learning for K-12 practitioners is a companion piece to the *Bring Learning to Life* video. Teachers can use this guide to help integrate service-learning into their classrooms to strengthen and enhance academic development. This guide may also be helpful for the application of service-learning in less formal educational environments, such as after-school programs and youth groups.

- WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING? A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Parental involvement is one of the most important factors in student success. This six-page guide provides information on the definition and benefits of service-learning, as well as practical steps that parents can take to ensure service-learning is a part of their child's education.

- BRING LEARNING TO LIFE BROCHURE

This eight-panel color brochure introduces the concept of service-learning, provides testimonials from teachers, students, and administrators about the benefits of service-learning, and uses research-based explanations of why service-learning works. The back of the brochure can be customized with your logo and program information.

- SLICE PROMOTIONAL POSTCARD

This apple-shaped postcard can be used to spread the word about the Service-Learning Ideas and Curricular Examples (SLICE) database, the newest tool from Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse to make service-learning easier and better. Use the postcard to let people know about the SLICE database's hundreds of easy-to-download service-learning lesson plans, syllabi, and project ideas.

- LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA'S NATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING CLEARINGHOUSE BROCHURE

This full-color brochure provides information on National Service-Learning Clearinghouse's free tools and resources, training and technical services, and more.

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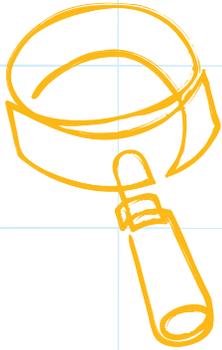
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HOW TO GIVE

PRESENTATIONS

ON SERVICE-LEARNING



INVESTIGATION

Goal Setting

Before you give the presentation, examine your goals. Think through why you are making your presentation. Are you:

- Trying to **explain service-learning** to parents, school boards, or other audiences?
- Looking to **develop partnerships** with other groups, programs, or organizations that could help you expand your program, provide in-kind goods or services, develop curriculum materials, etc.?
- **Recruiting** students, community members, or others to get involved in your service-learning effort?
- Looking for funders to provide **monetary support** for your program?
- Encouraging teachers, school administrators, community leaders, or others to **start a service-learning program**?

Write down your goals and determine why they are important to your service-learning program. You need to make sure your audience is clear about the purpose of your talk and what you are asking.

Now begin to prepare the logistics for your presentation.

GOALS:

- *explain service-learning*
- *develop partnerships*
- *recruit others*
- *receive monetary support*
- *start a service-learning program*

PLANNING

Find a Place to Speak

Finding a place to speak is easy. Many schools, nonprofit organizations, civic groups, and government decision-making bodies would be interested in service-learning. Each group that you speak to may have special requirements for speakers, so call ahead and make sure you meet its guidelines. Be sure you understand all of the technical requirements, like access to computers, video screens, or the Internet.

- A local school is a great place to start. Schools might schedule a one-day or weeklong service-learning information event that acquaints teachers, administrators, and students with the concepts of service-learning. You can also go back to the school you attended or find a social studies or government class at a nearby school.
 - Community service clubs are great venues, too. Check with your state service commission or education agency to find out what schools participate in Learn and Serve America.
 - College campuses are good places to make presentations, as many students, faculty, and staff are thinking about new ways to increase community connections and how to enhance learning. Contact the campus civic engagement office or director.
 - Youth organizations, such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, Boys and Girls Clubs, and “Y” clubs, are interested in programs about community service.
- 
- Check out local service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, or the Chamber of Commerce. Check the Web or the Yellow Pages to find a local contact.
 - Many faith-based organizations host guest speakers. Contact clergy, leaders, or youth groups in these organizations.
 - You may want to speak at a local city/town council or county board meeting. These civic leaders are happy to hear about community projects taking place in their area. Ask them to pass a proclamation in honor of your service-learning program.
 - If you’re still feeling a little reluctant to get out there with your story, ask a fellow service-learning leader to team up with you to make the experience more relaxing and enjoyable.



HOW TO DO

PRESENTATIONS

ON SERVICE-LEARNING

Tailor Your Presentation

Determine who will be in your audience. Make sure you are using language and terminology they will understand. Think about the best way to talk to and engage the audience in your presentation.



Secure Necessary Materials and Equipment

You will also want to consider what service-learning materials will support your presentation. You can visit Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse to identify materials that may be helpful. You can order additional materials from the site, including *Bring Learning to Life* posters, videos, and other resources.

Be sure to check ahead for any A/V needs, such as a projection screen for your videos or PowerPoint.

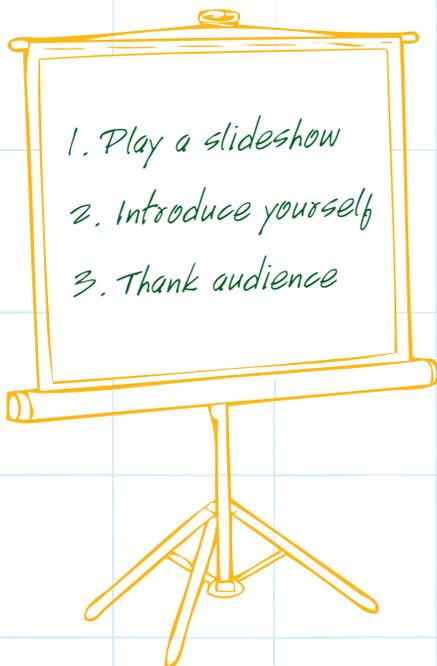
Prepare Your Presentation

Learn about your audience and tailor your presentation to include relevant information addressing needs and interests. Determine how long you have to speak, and be prepared to stick to it. Allow time for questions and answers.

After you've gathered the information and materials you'll need, it is time to plan how to move through your presentation. Establishing a step-by-step plan beforehand will remove the guesswork from presenting and ensure that you are able to touch upon all relevant topics.

You will want to tailor your approach, of course, but here is a helpful outline with several activities you may want to include:

1. Play a slideshow or display the enclosed opening media loop as guests arrive.
2. Introduce yourself and any others who are with you.
3. Thank your audience for coming.

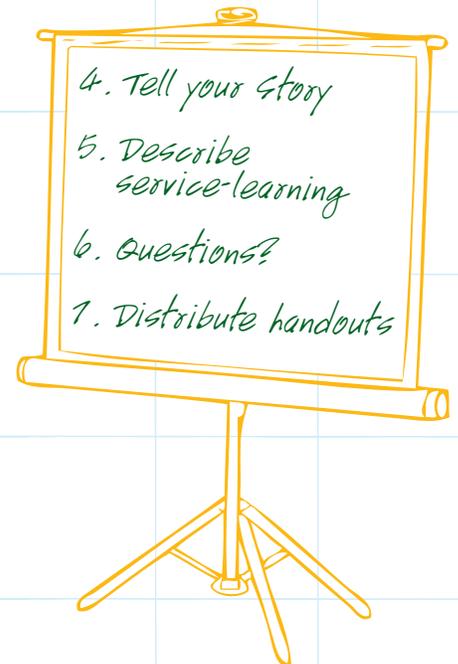


4. Tell your story. First and foremost – you're there to share your own experience.
 - Describe what attracted you to service-learning
 - Detail your past service-learning experiences
 - Talk about any unique or memorable experiences you or others had with service-learning
 - Identify the impacts a particular service-learning initiative had on the community
 - Explain why you recommend service-learning programs to others

5. Describe service-learning in general using the information on the DVD or in the guide, such as the video, PowerPoints, and other assets.

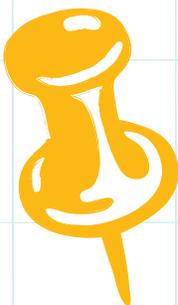
6. Provide an opportunity for questions.

7. Distribute any handouts (brochures, guides, etc.) and direct the audience to get more information at www.servicelearning.org.



Practice

Know your stuff. Try your presentation out first on your family, friends, or other service-learning participants, and ask for feedback. Make sure that you're meeting your time target and are comfortable using media such as PowerPoint. Be sure you have all notes, handouts, and materials that you want to use. Prepare a back-up plan to present your information in case there are technology problems at the site.



Promote

If you're speaking to a group where the public is invited, post the information in a community calendar or newspaper, on a bulletin board, or online through Web sites or social networking sites. Work with your host to determine if there are ways to publicize events, and see the "Taking It to the Next Level" section later in this guide.



HOW TO DO

PRESENTATIONS

ON SERVICE-LEARNING

ACTION

Presentation

Get to the location in plenty of time to meet your host. Check the room set-up and make sure that the equipment is working properly. Introduce yourself to the audience and show the media loop before beginning.

- Relax. Smile and make eye contact with your audience.
- Be aware of who you are talking to and adjust your presentation as necessary to fit the needs of the group.
- Introduce yourself and provide the audience with an outline of what you are going to cover.
- Tell your own story and the service-learning story.
- Respond to all questions. It's okay if you don't know the answer. You can refer your audience to other resources, such as the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.
- Thank your host and the audience for listening, and make yourself available for anyone who'd like to talk after the formal presentation.
- Leave handouts and other information with your host and the audience.



REFLECTION

Evaluation

After the presentation, ask your host for feedback. Follow up on loose ends, like finding answers to questions you couldn't answer on the spot. Thank your host again for the chance to tell the service-learning story.

When you go back to your organization, you may want to spend some time reflecting on and further analyzing your presentation using the feedback from your host and your own observations. Reflect on your presentation goals. Did you accomplish what you set out to do? Were there parts of the presentation that went more smoothly than others? Evaluate what worked and what didn't, and use this information to help you develop stronger presentations in the future.

DEMONSTRATION/CELEBRATION

Pass on to members of your organization or other service-learning stakeholders (e.g., through e-mail discussion lists, social media venues, etc.) your successes and lessons learned from your experience. Share:

- interactions and conversations with the audience,
- tips or ideas you learned about during discussion,
- dialogue that generated new perspectives,
- new relationships,
- experiences you brought back from the event that will help you communicate to the field the excitement and inspiration that service-learning brings.

Whatever you do, be sure to take a moment to celebrate the contribution you've just made to building the service-learning movement!



TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

In addition to making presentations, there are lots of other ways to spread the word about service-learning.

BRANDING

When developing promotional materials for your service-learning project, it's important that what you produce is easily recognizable as being part of the service-learning movement. To help with this, be sure to use the definition of service-learning found in the PowerPoint.

It's a good idea to create the same look and feel through all your materials. That way, when someone sees your poster and goes to check out your Web site, he or she will notice a uniformity that reinforces the positive aspects of your service-learning project. Changing the aesthetics too much may lead others to view your efforts as disjointed and disorganized.



And of course, make sure that Learn and Serve America materials get the exposure they deserve. Share them at your events and presentations. If you are a Learn and Serve America grantee, be sure to include the Learn and Serve America logo on all materials you create.

SOCIAL MEDIA/WEB 2.0

facebook



twitter

Social media and Web 2.0 are terms used to describe online tools that encourage collaboration, communication, and user-generated content. Everything from social networks (like Facebook and MySpace) to video sites (such as YouTube) and podcasts (short, downloadable radio shows) is considered a social media application. Others to keep in mind include photo-sharing sites like Flickr, blogs (Web logs), Twitter or other sites for microblogging (a form of blogging where users send brief text updates), and wikis (Web pages that are open for anyone to edit, such as Wikipedia).

But how can you use these social media tools to gain publicity and support for your service-learning project or for service-learning in general? With a little creativity, of course!

- **Social networks:** Social networking sites, such as Facebook and MySpace, are great places for connecting with and organizing a diverse group of participants. You can create pages to connect with other like-minded individuals, organize conversations, upload photos, use features to plan and invite people to events, and much more!
- **Video sites:** A digital video is a powerful tool for spreading a message. Even with an inexpensive camcorder, you can create a clip and upload it for free, and others can link to it and share it.
- **Blogs:** A perfect medium for keeping a journal on the development of your service-learning project, a blog can also be used to generate discussion in the comment section or as a digital bulletin board to publicize the details of upcoming activities. You can also use blogs as a space for youth reflections and let the reflections tell the service-learning story. Microblogging can be used in many of the same ways to spread your message and reach a wide number of people.



TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

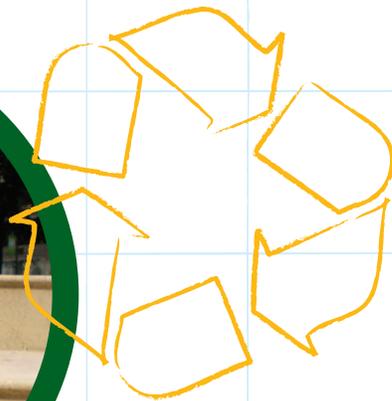
MEDIA RELATIONS

The local paper or news channel can be your best friend when building support for service-learning programs. The best way to get coverage is to identify the most interesting and unique aspect of your program and pitch it to reporters who have covered similar topics in the past. Here are some questions you can ask yourself:

- Is my program working to face a challenge that the reporter has identified in previous articles or broadcasts?
- Is my program the first of its kind in the area?
- Is there a way to tie my program to a current event or seasonal story that automatically gets coverage every year?

You can also take a broader approach by reaching out to the media with a press release. Press releases are written like news stories and begin with the most important aspect of the story as the first line. They often include quotes from relevant or newsworthy people, several hard facts, and a “boiler plate” that describes the nature of your organization or event.

Social media press releases are another option. These are written like press releases but sent over e-mail, and include links to Web sites, digital images, and sometimes digital videos or podcasts.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

PSAs are free “commercials” for nonprofits offered by television and radio stations. PSAs can be used to bring awareness to an organization’s work or to an upcoming special event. As always, contact the station for specific requirements, but generally PSAs should be:

- brief, concise, and catchy,
- submitted as a written script in the form of 10-, 15-, or 30-second spots,
- typed, double-spaced, and in CAPS,
- in the correct format. Check to see if a pre-recorded spot is necessary or if the station will accept a live-copy script to be produced.

You can use the enclosed *Bring Learning to Life* PSAs or download them from www.tvaccessreports.com/learnandserve.

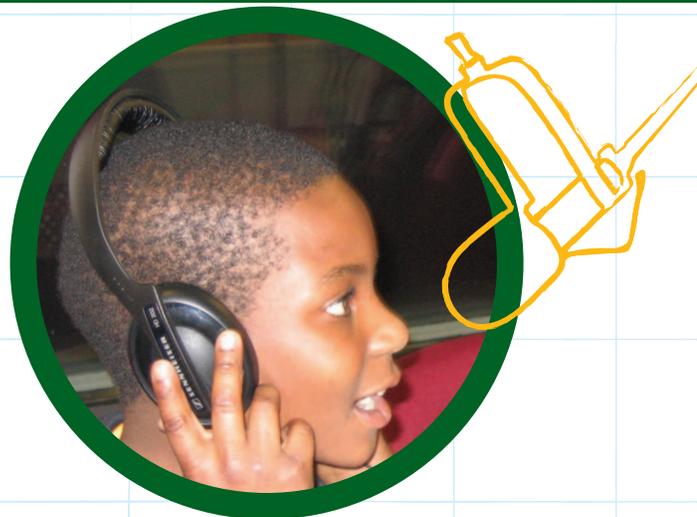
WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO SPREAD SERVICE-LEARNING

You don’t have to fly solo when trying to take your service-learning project to the next level – it’s a team effort.

Get your supporters, neighborhood allies, and community leaders involved in spreading the news about the service-learning initiative. Request opportunities to address the crowd at club meetings, and see who is willing to recruit associates from his or her circle of friends and colleagues. Distribute materials, inquire about people’s connections to local media, and promote your Web site in as many places as you can.

With the cooperation of school officials, businesses, and community organizations, you can greatly expand the reach of your service-learning initiative.

For additional resources on these topics, visit www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/hot_topics/partnerships.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is service-learning?

A: Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich learning experiences, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

Q: What is the difference between service-learning and community service?

A: Community service is volunteer action taken to meet the needs of others and better the community as a whole. Service-learning is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of students engaged in service, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled. Service-learning provides structured time for thoughtful planning of the service project and guided reflection by participants on the service experience. Overall, the most important feature of effective service-learning programs is that both learning and service are emphasized.

Q: What is Learn and Serve America?

A: Learn and Serve America, administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, is a catalyst for service-learning programs nationwide that connect community service with academic curriculum. Through these programs, in class and in extracurricular activities, students serve others in their communities while strengthening their academic and civic skills. In addition, service-learning fosters partnerships between schools and their communities that strengthen communities and meet immediate community needs.

Q: What is the Corporation for National and Community Service?

A: The Corporation for National and Community Service is the federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation engages more than four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to meet local needs through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs. For more information, visit www.NationalService.gov.

Q: Is service-learning a new idea?

A: The practice of service-learning dates back much further than the term itself, beginning with educational movements and social change in the late 1880s. The intellectual foundations of service-learning in the United States trace back to the early 1900s with the work of John Dewey, William James, and others who promoted models of “learning by doing,” and linked service to personal and social development. The term “service-learning” was coined by two educators in 1967 to describe the combination of conscious educational growth with the accomplishment of certain tasks that meet genuine human needs. You can find out more at www.servicelearning.org/what_is_service-learning/history.



Q: Who are the community partners in service-learning?

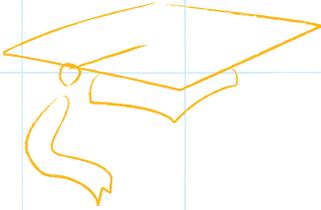
A: Service-learning partners can include elementary schools, secondary schools, institutions of higher education, community service programs, government agencies, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and tribal nations, just to name a few.

Q: Where does service-learning occur?

A: Service-learning programs are found in all subjects and grade levels throughout the United States, its tribes, and its territories. Each year, Learn and Serve America programs engage more than a million students – from kindergarten to higher education – in service-learning activities that support education, the environment, public safety, and other human needs. The degree to which these programs are implemented varies from a school-wide program to Maryland's statewide graduation requirement. For more information on states, standards, and service-learning, read the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse's Policy: K-12 Service-Learning fact sheet at www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/fact_sheets/k-12_facts/policy.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: How many college students do service-learning in the United States? How many universities offer service-learning for their students?

A: A rough estimate is available from the Campus Compact annual service statistics. These statistics reflect only Campus Compact member institutions and do not distinguish between community service and service-learning. You can find out more at www.compact.org/about/statistics.

Q: How can I be sure that service-learning is a part of my child's education?

A: Talk to teachers and administrators to find out whether service-learning is already taking place at your child's school. If it's not, consider presenting on service-learning to your school board or PTA.

State education agencies receive funding from Learn and Serve America to help build networks of teachers and others who are knowledgeable about service-learning and can work to get programs started. Visit www.learnandserve.gov/about/contact/sea.asp to find contact information for someone in your State Education Agency who can help connect you to this larger community of service-learning supporters.

Q: Can service-learning occur in community-based settings?

A: Yes. The YMCA, Camp Fire USA, Girl Scouts of the USA, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, and many other large and small community organizations offer service learning through school partnerships and after-school programs.

Q: Is service-learning just for certain students?

A: No! Service-learning is for everyone. Service-learning is an effective teaching method for all students, including gifted and talented students, special education students, students with disabilities, at-risk youth, youth in inclusive classrooms, and students in alternative education.

Q: Where's the best place for me to learn more about service-learning?

A: *Bring Learning to Life* (and its companion resources) is a great place to start learning about service-learning. Order or download materials from www.servicelearning.org today.

Q: I want a more in-depth guide for developing my own service-learning program. What resource should I use?

A: Whether you're in K-12, higher education, community, or tribes and territories settings, Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse has the toolkits you need to start out in service-learning. Visit www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/tool_kits to download the toolkits.

Q: I'm looking to tailor my service-learning project to the subject I teach. Are there any guides that can point me in the right direction?

A: The Clearinghouse Web site offers the Service-Learning Ideas and Curricular Examples (SLICE) database of more than 500 discipline-specific project ideas. Visit www.servicelearning.org/slice.

Q: I'm a student/researcher working on a research paper about service-learning. Is there a database of articles I can refer to?

A: Yes! National Service-Learning Clearinghouse's library includes more than 7,000 items, including more than 1,500 that are available for download.

Q: I would like some examples of successful service-learning projects. Do you have testimonials?

A: You can access the Clearinghouse's Success Stories section at www.servicelearning.org/nslc/success_stories.

If you are asked a question that you can't answer, an expert is just a phone call away. Your service-learning questions can be answered by a live person by calling the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse - toll-free at 1-866-245-SERV (1318).



REFERENCES

GETTING STARTED

**Learn and Serve America's
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC)**

www.servicelearning.org

FUNDING

Learn and Serve America (LSA)

www.learnandserve.gov

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse's Funding Blog

www.servicelearning.org/rss/funding.html

PROMOTING YOUR PROJECT AND SERVICE-LEARNING

Promote Your Project

www.servicelearning.org/library/share

Communicators Institute Binder

www.servicelearning.org/communications/eOrganizer
www.campaignconsultation.com/GIZMOs/eorganizer

A Guide to Working with the Media

www.learnandserve.gov/pdf/Media_Guide.pdf

Service-Learning Research

www.learnandserve.gov/about/role_impact/index.asp



COMMUNITY

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse's Discussion Lists

www.servicelearning.org/what_is_service-learning/lists_news

Keep Up to Date Using Social Media/Web 2.0 Tools

www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/up_to_date/index.php

LESSON PLANS, SYLLABI, AND PROJECT IDEAS

Service-Learning Ideas and Curricular Examples (SLICE)

www.servicelearning.org/slice

Campus Compact Syllabus Collection

www.compact.org/syllabi

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Service-Learning Conferences and Events

www.servicelearning.org/events_jobs/slconf_events

Resource Center Service Calendar

www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/calendar



QUESTIONS?

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

questions@servicelearning.org



Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 



NationalService.gov

The Learn and Serve America program is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. The Corporation provides opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America.